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AUSTRIA  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA:  
TERRITORIAL PROBLEMS: AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK BOUNDARY

I. THE PROBLEM

The problem is to determine the boundary between Austria and Czechoslovakia in Southern Bohemia and Southern Moravia.

Certain Austrian legitimists seek the return to an independent Austria of about 70 square miles of Czechoslovak territory near Gmünd (Třeboň) and Feldsberg (Mikulov). The Czechoslovak Government in London demands the integral restoration of the 1937 frontiers. The area is particularly important because of its railway communications.

The Treaty of St. Germain in 1919 awarded to Czechoslovakia a small area including the railway station of Gmünd (České Velenice), an important junction for Southern Bohemia, but not the town itself, and the town of Feldsberg (Valtice), near Nikolsburg. This frontier gave Czechoslovakia control over the Thaya River south of Bréclav and over the Lundenberg-Feldsberg-Znaim (Břeclav-Valtice-Znojmo) railway. The Czechs had claimed both regions on ethnic and strategic grounds and had asserted that their cession to the new Republic would not injure Austria. Both the American and British delegations at Paris had made reservations concerning Gmünd, primarily on ethnic grounds. Mr. Lansing proposed that the parts of the territory assigned to Czechoslovakia, in excess of the old administrative frontier, should be reduced to the immediate regions of Gmünd and Feldsberg.

The Munich settlement transferred a considerable portion of Southern Bohemia and Southern Moravia to the German Reich, including Gmünd and Feldsberg.

II. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

A. Restoration of the 1937 Austrian-Czechoslovak Frontier

The total frontier area in Southern Bohemia and Southern Moravia involves about 2,160 square miles,

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with a population (1930) of about 396,000 (41 percent German, 58 percent Czechoslovak). The area is important economically because of its light industries and agriculture. Its railway connections are of primary significance. Strategically, the area guards the entrance into Southern Bohemia and, through the Moravian Gap, into Southern Moravia.

**B. Restoration of the Pre-1918 Boundary: Cession of Gmünd and Feldsberg to Austria**

This solution would involve about 70 square miles of territory in the region of Gmünd (Třebon) and Feldsberg (Mikulov) county. The lack of precision as to the area claimed and the absence of census data by communes render it impossible to state exactly the total population and ethnic distribution in this small area. According to the Czechoslovak census of 1930, Feldsberg district, of which the disputed area constitutes about one-half, had a population of 36,900, of whom 30,400 (82 percent) were German-Austrians and 4,400 (12 percent) were Czechoslovaks. The 1910 (Austrian) census also showed Feldsberg to be overwhelmingly German. Restoration of Gmünd to Austria would cut the communications from České Velenice to Plzen (Pilsen) and Prague, while restoration of Feldsberg to Austria would cut the railway from Břeclav to Znojmo and river communications on the Thaya.

**C. Retention of the Munich (1938) Boundary**

Retention of the boundary established at Munich would involve cession to Austria of an area of about 2,288 square miles, from Krumlov Český to Hodonín, with a total population of about 447,000 (1930), 55 percent German-Austrian and 45 percent Czechoslovak. Cession to Austria would breach the Southern Šumava (Böhmerwald) barriers of Czechoslovakia, and bring the Austrians within a few miles of České Budějovice (Budweis), Hradec Jindřichuv (Neuhaus), and Brno (Brünn); the fortified points of Znojmo (Znaim) and Mikolsburg would fall into Austrian hands, together with all avenues

of approach

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of approach from Austria into Southern Bohemia and Moravia. Not only Gmund and Feldsberg, but the České Budějovice-Linz route, the Lundenburg-Feldsberg-Znaim, and the Brzeclav end of the Prague-Brno-Vienna route, would fall into Austrian hands. Retention of this boundary would disrupt completely the communications system in Southern Bohemia and Southern Moravia, and would eliminate Czechoslovak control over the Thaya River and over the Morava (March) River south of Brzeclav. Economically the territory is important for its light industries, especially textiles, and agriculture.

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### III. DOCUMENTATION

#### A. Available Memoranda

Czechoslovak-Austrian Frontier: Historical Survey, 1918-1939. (T-360; August 5, 1943).

Czechoslovak-Austrian Frontier: Alternative Territorial Adjustments (T-359; August 5, 1943).

The Sudeten German Problem at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 (T-176; Dec. 5, 1942)

Sections of this memorandum are devoted especially to the Austrian claims and protests at the Paris Conference concerning the Austro-Czechoslovak frontiers (p.43)

Distribution of Germans in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia (T-214; Jan. 14, 1943)

A statistical analysis based on the 1930 Czechoslovak census (P. 24)

#### B. Other Studies

Austria and the Danubian Problem (Legitimist Presentation)

Studies of the Peace Aims of the European Nations. No. A-4. Council on Foreign Relations (p. 10). With two appendices.

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